

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 INRE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10

PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 SAM-01 SAJ-01 ACDA-19

IO-14 DRC-01 /124 W

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FM AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4352

INFO USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY LONDON

CINCLANT

COMICEDEFOR

C O N F I D E N T I A L REYKJAVIK 0286

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR UK IC

SUBJECT: TRANSIT OF KEFLAVIK AIRPORT BY BRITISH TROOPS

REF: STATE 030539

1. IN REPLY TO QUESTIONS RAISED BY BRITISH ON PROPOSED
TRANSIT OF KEFLAVIK BY RAF AIRCRAFT LIFTING TROOPS
TO CANADA, EMBASSY AND COMICEDEFOR SEE NO GROUNDS FOR OBJECTIONS
BY USG. HOWEVER, WE STRONGLY URGE THAT, AS BRITISH PROPOSE,
MATTER NOT BE TREATED AS ROUTINE TRANSIT BY NATO AIRCRAFT AND
THAT APPROVAL OF GOI BE SOUGHT BY BRITIST.

2. FROM POLITICAL POINT OF VIEW, THIS TRANSIT HAS ADVANTAGE
THAT IT DOES NOT INVOLVE USE OF TROOPS FOR ANY CONTROVERSIAL
PURPOSE. EVEN ANTI-NATO PEOPLE'S ALLIANCE CONCEDES THAT "LANDING
RIGHTS FOR NATO AIRCRAFT IN ICELAND WILL BE NECESSARY AS LONG
AS ICELAND IS A MEMBER OF NATO." AFTER LARGE-SCALE MOVEMENT
OF SOVIET AIRCRAFT THROUGH KEFLAVIK TO AND FROM CUBA IN PAST
TWO MONTHS, GOI WOULD HAVE SOME DIFFICULTY IN REFUSING.

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IN THIS CONNECTION, BRITISH MIGHT WISH TO SET USEFUL PRECEDENT

WITH GOI BY OFFERING TO PROVIDE ADVANCE NOTICE ON FLIGHT PLANS
AND DETAILED MANIFESTS WHICH GOI WAS UNWILLING TO ASK SOVS FOR.

3. ABOVE IS NOT TO SAY WE BELIEVE GOI WILL AUTOMATICALLY AGREE.
MOVEMENT OF THIS SIZE CANNOT GO UNNOTICED AND GOI MIGHT
BE CONCERNED AT ADVERSE COMMENT AND POSSIBLE DEMONSTRATIONS.
HOWEVER, POINT WOULD NOT BE LOST ON PRIMIN AND POSSIBLY OTHERS
THAT THIS MOVEMENT DEMONSTRATED ABILITY OF NATO FORCES FOR
RAPID DEPLOYMENT AND REINFORCEMENT. SAME POINT WOULD BE UNDER-
STOOD BY PEOPLE'S ALLIANCE MINISTERS WHO CAN BE EXPECTED TO
OPPOSE IT. IN VIEW OF APPRAISAL OF BRITISH AMBASSADOR HERE,
BRITISH MIGHT WANT TO SCALE DOWN SIZE OF REQUEST.

4. ON TECHNICAL SIDE, COMICEDEFOR CURRENTLY SEES NO PROBLEM
WITH FUEL SUPPLY. HOWEVER, BILLETING FOR ANY OVERNIGHT STOP-
OVERS WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR LARGE NUMBERS AND, DURING SUMMER
MONTHS, PROBLEM COULD NOT BE SOLVED ON HOTEL-SHORT ECONOMY.
BACK-UP AIRCRAFT WOULD PROBABLY BE REQUIRED.

5. ON BALANCE, WE DO NOT SEE MATTER AS NEGATIVELY AS BRITISH
AMBASSADOR AND DO NOT BELIEVE A BRITISH APPROACH TO GOI WOULD
HAVE ANY ADVERSE EFFECT ON USG INTERESTS AT THIS SENSITIVE
TIME. IF SUCH A REQUEST PUTS PEOPLE'S ALLIANCE MINISTERS ON
SPOT, SO BE IT.
MARTIN

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